

Agricultural Practices

Puget Sound Management Plan Goal

- Reduce and ultimately eliminate harm from pollution stemming from agricultural practices on commercial and noncommercial farms, including animal wastes, pesticides, sediments and nutrients.

Strategy for Achieving Goal

- Implement comprehensive programs through state and local agencies involving education, financial and technical assistance, and, as necessary, regulation and enforcement, to effectively implement farm management plans and management practices and measures.

Background and Trends

The Puget Sound basin's fertile soil lends itself to a wide range of commercial and noncommercial farming. Agriculture is an important part of the basin's economy and culture. The Department of Ecology estimates that agricultural practices impair about 55 percent of the state's river miles that were assessed in 1998. The state uses a different approach to managing pollution from non-dairy operations than for dairies.

Controlling pollution from non-dairy agricultural lands is largely voluntary, with an emphasis on education. The main approach is to help farmers control and prevent pollution by implementing individual farm management plans. These plans are developed with assistance from local conservation districts or local governments. State-level education, financial and technical assistance and, where necessary, regulation and enforcement supports these local efforts.

There are an estimated 145,000 dairy animals in the Puget Sound basin, around half the state's total. The Dairy Nutrient Management Act of 1998 created a new program within the Department of Ecology for managing dairy wastes. This program uses a process of registration, inspection and technical assistance to control farm wastes generated by the state's commercial dairies. All dairy farms are required to develop approved dairy nutrient management plans by July 1, 2002. A Dairy Nutrient Management Task Force chaired by legislators monitors progress and provides oversight of the program.

Riparian setbacks to protect salmon will be required in all plans developed under the Dairy Nutrient Management Act of 1998. Agriculture Fish and Water, a cooperative process between state and federal agencies and the state's major agricultural commodity groups, is reviewing riparian setback standards. The review will determine what agricultural practices, including riparian area management, are necessary to meet requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

Highlights of 2001-2003 Actions

- Ecology will reduce pollution from dairy operations in the Puget Sound basin by implementing the 1998 Dairy Nutrient Management Act. This includes providing technical assistance, registering farms, identifying potential pollution sources, conducting inspections and ensuring compliance.
- Ecology will provide technical assistance, education and other support to conservation districts and farm operators on water quality problems related to poor agricultural practices.
- The Conservation Commission will provide grants to the 12 conservation districts to implement the *Puget Sound Work Plan*.

2001-2003 Budget for State Actions

Total Enhancement	\$840,000
Total Provisoed Funding	\$2,178,511

		See page 9 for key.					
STATE AGENCY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	Pri-ori-ty	Non-point	Sal-mon	Budget Code	PS Plan Element	Action ID
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE							
Provide technical assistance to local governments and the public on the proper use of pesticides.	All referred complaints regarding pesticide use will be investigated. Annual summaries of complaints and responses to them will be prepared. Pesticide applicators will be licensed and recertified. The department will help Washington State University train pesticide applicators. Training on the safe use and disposal of pesticides will be provided in English and Spanish. The department will restrict use of pesticides to protect endangered species. Waste pesticides will be collected and safely disposed of, as laws and funding allow. Routine enforcement activities will be conducted to enforce the legal use of pesticides.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DOA-01	AG-0	190
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY							
Reduce pollution from dairy operations in the Puget Sound basin and statewide by implementing the 1998 Dairy Nutrient Management Act. Continue to register dairy farms and identify potential sources of pollution from dairy cattle. Perform routine and follow-up inspections on dairies. Maintain a database with information on dairy farms, inspections and compliance. Encourage implementation of best management practices. Provide technical assistance, and, where needed, issue wastewater discharge permits and take enforcement actions.	Pollution from dairies will be reduced or eliminated, resulting in improved water quality in Puget Sound and adjacent waters. Bacteria, nutrients and other pollutants will be reduced. Water quality standards will be developed to protect uses such as shellfish and recreation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOE-02	AG-2	191
Participate in the Agriculture, Fish and Water discussions with the aim of developing agreements to implement agriculture programs to protect fish and water quality. Provide continued technical assistance, education and other support to conservation districts and farm operators on water quality problems from poor agricultural practices. Participate on the State Conservation Commission.	Protective agricultural practices will be agreed upon and implemented. Compliance with water quality standards and laws will be improved.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOE-03	AG-0	192